



# DIOCESAN PRESS SERVICE

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

EPISCOPAL CHURCH CENTER • 815 SECOND AVENUE • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10017

alter H. Boyd, Press Officer  
n. Drew Dearnaley, Assistant Press Officer

Telephone: (212) 867-8400

81140

May 7, 1981

## PRIMATES EXPLORE POVERTY, AUTHORITY, DISARMAMENT

WASHINGTON -- The primates of the Anglican Communion ended a week of new and renewed fellowship here determined to press for multilateral disarmament and with a heightened awareness of the need for inter-faith dialogue and a continuing struggle against all forms of poverty.

The 27 chief figures of worldwide Anglicanism kept to an intense working schedule that began April 26 with Evensong at the National Cathedral and ended with a similar service May 1. In the interval, they lived, worshipped, worked and ate in the College of Preachers on the Cathedral Close; leaving only briefly for a visit to the White House and tea with Vice President George Bush.

Their labors were focused in two related directions: authority within the Anglican Communion and the exercise of that authority in the world.

The issue of authority -- in a Church that is episcopally focused and synodically governed and in which members maintain autonomy while conceding a spiritual debt to the see of Canterbury -- is one that has been wrestled with for many years and in many forums. The 1978 Lambeth meeting of Anglican bishops had asked the primates committee to explore this matter. Five papers -- including two read at the conference -- guided their deliberations.

In their final report, the primates noted: "Clearly authority is not merely an ecclesial question. It is a social, political, national and international issue. Christians believe that authority flows from God. Authority has always been exercised in the universal Church in a wide variety of styles. The style characteristic of the Anglican Communion was described in the report of the 1948 Lambeth Conference as "dispersed Authority" i.e. Authority is not pyramidal, locussed in one particular office, but it is diffused and exercised in appropriate modes and through appropriate individuals or corporate bodies, e.g. Colleges of Bishops and Synods."

-more-







A seven-point appendix to that report adds: "In a divided universal Church, the Anglican episcopate shares its peculiar responsibility with those called and chosen to exercise episcopé in the totality of Christ's Church. The Anglican episcopate acknowledges that it has a special obligation to consult with leaders of other Churches and thereby to practise collegiality in a divided Church.

"Anglicans recognise that all exercise of episcopé entails personal loyalty to Christ, commitment to the poor and outcast, willingness to suffer for him, and an open appeal to the common conscience of fellow human beings."

From that perspective, the primates went on to discuss the working of authority in the world through three working groups: in ecumenism and inter-faith conversation, Christian response to war in a nuclear age, and poverty.

The ecumenism/inter-faith group, working with Archbishop Edward W. Scott of Canada as moderator, agreed that as bishops "in the universal Church of God, exercising their ministry in the Anglican Communion, they were called, even in a divided universal Church, to be symbols of unity and living links between the local and universal Church and that they had great responsibilities to provide leadership towards ecumenical goals. In this connection we acknowledged our need to have a clearer understanding of our own identity and tradition, especially in relation to our claim for 'comprehensiveness.' "

Specifically, they raised the need for increased inter-faith dialogue, "not simply in third world situations but universally" and commended the documents of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission to the Churches with the hope "that these documents will be widely discussed at all levels. . . in such ways as regional circumstances make desirable."

The discussion on poverty -- led by Archbishop Khotso Makhulu of Central Africa -- ranged over the complex systems and causes of poverty and, in remarks addressed largely to affluent nations pointed out ". . . it would be a serious delusion, especially in our more affluent societies, to imagine that poverty is confined to the lack of material resources, though primary poverty may indeed be located there. There is also intellectual, social and cultural poverty, and most of all, poverty of spirit, expressed, not in terms of humility, but in that spiritual malnutrition which is a consequence of our ignoring God."

The most definitive statement came from the work of the group exploring Christian attitudes toward war in a nuclear age with Bishop Alastair Haggart, Primus of Scotland, as moderator.





In their paper, the primates pointed out that ancient "just war" theories may be inapplicable to nuclear war. They went on to praise the 1978 U.N. Special Assembly on Disarmament in its calls for comprehensive test bans, a halt to arms trade, and the development of alternative security systems. The statement "strongly commends" a proposal by U.N. secretary general Kurt Waldheim that each nation dedicate 0.1 percent of its defense budget to disarmament research and education.

The statement went on with a specific pledge ". . .to work for multilateral disarmament, and to support those who seek, by education and other appropriate means, to influence those people and agencies who shape nuclear policy. In particular we believe that the SALT talks must be resumed and pursued with determination."

The statement concluded by referring to the Archbishop of Canterbury's National Press Club speech in which the tone of the debate was set: "'We have made a great advance in technology without a corresponding advance in moral sense. We are capable of unbinding the forces which lie at the heart of creation and of destroying our civilization. . . .It is vital that we see modern weapons of war for what they are -- evidence of madness.' As Christians we recognise a demonic element in the complexity of our world, but we also affirm our belief in the good will and purpose and Providence of God for his whole creation. This requires us to work for a world characterised not by fear, but by mutual trust and justice," the primates said.

Veteran observers pointed out that the major significance of the meeting was not so much in the papers as in what it revealed of the Anglican Communion, which one characterized as "predominantly non-western, diverse in beliefs and increasingly engaged with the problems of the world."

In coming to grips with that, the primates agreed that three of their colleagues from Africa should share the planning and agenda for the next meeting of the group with the Archbishop of Canterbury. These last two meetings have been largely planned by the European and North American segments of the communion and it is expected that the forthcoming meeting -- set for 1984 -- will have a strong influence on the nature, and perhaps the site, of the planned 1988 gathering of the bishops of the communion.

Reflecting on this, the same commentator reported, "Under the leadership of the Archbishop of Canterbury, it is clear that the more than 50 million members of the Anglican Communion are learning to accept and live with their differences."

# # # # #

-more-

Attached is the Press Statement of the Primates Meeting.

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2024



Anglican Primates' Meeting

College of Preachers, Washington Cathedral

April 26 - May 1, 1981

STATEMENT

The Anglican Communion in many of its documents is described as a "fellowship of autonomous Churches." In this last week, we, the Primates of the Anglican Communion, have met in fellowship with God in his Church, and with an awareness of our shared responsibilities for leadership, deeper and richer than can be easily expressed. We have shared in an awareness of movement: God is at work in our world -- we help or hinder Him. The issues we face are immensely complex but He is with us in our struggles to understand, to influence and to lead. It is in the context of this awareness that particular issues were discussed, not with a view to making definitive public statements, but to enable each one of us to play a more effective role in our respective Provinces.

Among the issues wrestled with we would mention the following:

AUTHORITY

Clearly Authority is not merely an ecclesial question. It is a social, political, national and international issue. Christians believe that Authority flows from God. Authority has always been exercised in the universal Church in a wide variety of styles. The style characteristic of the Anglican Communion was described in the report of the 1948 Lambeth Conference as "dispersed Authority" i.e. Authority is not pyramidal, locussed in one particular office, but it is diffused and exercised in appropriate modes and through appropriate individuals or corporate bodies, e.g. Colleges of Bishops and Synods. Not only did we seek to understand the theology of Authority; we also considered how Authority is both experienced and exercised in our Communion. The papers which were the basis of our Discussion and the paper on Practical implications which was composed and approved during the Meeting are available, the latter paper forming Appendix A of our Press Report.

In addition to this concern we had three groups.

1. Ecumenical and Inter-Faith Policy

It was agreed that these two subjects could not be adequately dealt with in the time available but the group acknowledged the importance of Inter-Faith matters, not simply in Third World situations but universally, and in many of our Provinces we are actively engaged in discussion with those of other faiths. The Primates recognised that as Bishops in the universal Church of God, exercising their ministry in the Anglican Communion, they were called, even in a divided universal Church, to be symbols of unity and living links between the local and universal Church and that they had great responsibilities to provide leadership towards Ecumenical goals. In this connection we acknowledged our need to have a clearer understanding of our own identity and tradition, especially in relation to our claim for "comprehensiveness." In considering Anglican/Roman Catholic relations the Primates unanimously passed the attached resolution (Appendix B).



## 2. World Poverty

Many Primates brought personal experience of the varied and complex causes of poverty -- natural disasters, ignorance, overpopulation, the Arms trade, war, economic systems, greed, oppression, alienation of peoples from each other and from their environment, and alienation from God. But it would be a serious delusion, especially in our more affluent societies, to imagine that poverty is confined to the lack of material resources, though primary poverty may indeed be located there. There is also intellectual, social and cultural poverty, and most of all, poverty of spirit, expressed, not in terms of humility, but in that spiritual malnutrition which is a consequence of our ignoring God. The Primates considered ways in which they might give leadership to the Church in response to these agonizing issues.

## 3. Christian attitudes to War in a Nuclear Age

The Primates felt compelled to take a stance on this vast and complex issue. They commit themselves to a policy of action. This is set out in the Statement which is part of the Press Release (Appendix C).

### Lambeth Conference

The last Lambeth Conference asked the Primates' Meeting to advise the Archbishop of Canterbury concerning future Lambeth Conferences. We agreed that one should be called in 1988 and that it should be residential. The place in which it should take place; the categories and numbers to be invited; the format of the conference; what should be included in the agenda and what long term preparatory work would be necessary -- these and other matters, after a preliminary discussion were referred to the Archbishop of Canterbury for further consideration and appropriate consultation.

### Primates' Meetings

We agreed that we should meet again in 1984. Various meeting places were considered, and some are to be further investigated. Representative African Primates have been asked, in consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury, to be responsible for preparing the agenda and for the manner in which it should be dealt with.

+ + + + +

## Appendix A

### PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ANGLICAN VIEW OF AUTHORITY

1. The Anglican Communion accepts and endeavours to practise the theology of dispersed authority as set out in the 1948 Lambeth Conference document, The Anglican Communion ("The Meaning and Unity of the Anglican Communion," pp. 84-86).

2. Since that statement was written the Anglican Communion has evolved two further institutions to meet the swift changing circumstances in different parts of the world: the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting, within guidelines laid down by the Lambeth Conference.

-more-



Fundamentally these two institutions are consistent with the theology of dispersed authority, referred to above.

The Primates' Meeting expressed that special responsibility characteristic of the episcopate. The A.C.C. reflects the responsibilities characteristic of a synodically governed Church.

3. In Christ's one holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, every member has, in virtue of his or her own baptism, his or her special vocation and ministry.

4. In the Anglican Church, the episcopate has a particular responsibility for teaching the faith, for encouraging, promoting and maintaining the proclamation in word and deed of the apostolic gospel by and in the whole Church.

5. In a divided universal Church, the Anglican episcopate shares its peculiar responsibility with those called and chosen to exercise episcopé in the totality of Christ's Church. The Anglican episcopate acknowledges that it has a special obligation to consult with leaders of other Churches and thereby to practise collegiality in a divided Church.

6. Anglicans recognise that all exercise of episcopé entails personal loyalty to Christ, commitment to the poor and outcast, willingness to suffer for him, and an open appeal to the common conscience of fellow human beings.

7. In the continuing process of defining the consensus fidelium, Anglicans regard criticism and response as an essential element by which Authority is exercised and experienced and as playing a vital part in the work of the Holy Spirit in maintaining the Church in fidelity to the Apostolic Gospel.

+ + + + +

## Appendix B

### ANGLICAN/ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION

"The Conference:

"1. welcomes the work of the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission which was set up jointly by the Lambeth Conference of 1968 and by the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity;

"2. recognizes in the three Agreed Statements of this Commission a solid achievement, one in which we can recognise the faith of our Church, and hopes that they will provide a basis for sacramental sharing between our two Communions if and when the finished Statements are approved by the respective authorities of our Communions.

"5. asks the Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council to bring the resolution to the attention of the various synods of the Anglican Communion for discussion and action."

(Resolution 33, sections 1, 2 and 5, Lambeth Conference 1978)

-more-



The Primates of the Anglican Communion meeting at Washington, D.C. in April/May 1981 welcome the ARCIC Reports so far published, and look forward to the further reports to be published on the completion of the Commission's work in the Autumn of 1981, and, having in mind the Lambeth Conference 1978 Resolution quoted above, hope that these documents will be widely discussed on that basis at all levels throughout both Churches in such ways as regional circumstances make desirable.

+ + + + +

## Appendix C

### CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES TO WAR IN A NUCLEAR AGE

The Church in former ages justified war in certain circumstances by recourse to the theory of the 'just war.' This theory was never intended to commend war, but to limit its frequency. There have always been Christians who repudiated any legitimizing of war. Today many others would join them, believing that the very conditions required for a just war themselves condemn not only the actual use of nuclear weapons, but also their possession as a deterrent.

Whilst regarding the legitimacy of such a unilateralist pacifist position, not all of us believe that the Church corporately ever has adopted or is likely to adopt such a stance. This does not mean that we are either indifferent or uncommitted. We strongly identify with the Final Document of the United Nations Special Assembly Session on Disarmament of 1978, especially when it calls for a comprehensive nuclear test ban; a halt to conventional arms procurement and trade; the development of an alternative system of security to the accumulation of weaponry and the mobilization of public opinion to counteract the armament race. We also strongly commend the proposal by Dr. Kurt Waldheim, the U.N. Secretary General, that all national governments set aside 0.1 percent of their defence budgets for disarmament research and education.

We pledge ourselves to work for multilateral disarmament, and to support those who seek, by education and other appropriate means, to influence those people and agencies who shape nuclear policy. In particular we believe that the SALT talks must be resumed and pursued with determination.

The Archbishop of Canterbury in a speech in Washington said: "We have made a great advance in technology without a corresponding advance in moral sense. We are capable of unbinding the forces which lie at the heart of creation and of destroying our civilization. . . . It is vital that we see modern weapons of war for what they are -- evidence of madness." As Christians we recognize a demonic element in the complexity of our world, but we also affirm our belief in the good will and purpose and Providence of God for his whole creation. This requires us to work for a world characterized not by fear, but by mutual trust and justice.

"MANKIND IS CONFRONTED WITH A CHOICE: WE MUST HALT THE ARMS RACE AND PROCEED TO DISARMAMENT, OR FACE ANNIHILATION."

(Final Document of U.N. Assembly on Disarmament)

# # # # #

-more-



PHOTO CAPTIONS

81140/1 The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Robert A.K. Runcie, distributes communion at Washington Cathedral services April 26 before the primates of the Anglican Communion gathered for a week-long meeting on the cathedral close. Runcie, wearing the cope given him at his installation, was the chief celebrant at the eucharist at which Washington Bishop John T. Walker preached. Walker served as chaplain for the primates' meeting. (CREDIT: MORTON BROFFMAN)

81140/2 Vice President George Bush greets Anglican primates who broke from their week-long meeting to be his guests at the White House. With Bush are, from left, Dr. Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury; Archbishop Timothy Olofusoye of Nigeria and Presiding Bishop John M. Allin of the Episcopal Church. (CREDIT: MORTON BROFFMAN)

81140/3 The 27 primates of the Anglican Communion took one break from their arduous week-long Washington meeting for a visit to the White House and conversation with Vice President George Bush. Bush and White House Curator Clement Conger entertained the primates for more than an hour beginning with tea in one of the state dining rooms. Flanking Bush at the table are Presiding Bishop John M. Allin (left) and Archbishop Robert Runcie. (CREDIT: MORTON BROFFMAN)

81140/4 The Anglican primates ended a week-long Washington meeting at the National Cathedral with a press conference at which they issued a strong appeal for nuclear disarmament and lifted up aspects of authority in the Anglican Communion. Archbishop Trevor Huddleston of the Indian Ocean makes a point at the conference while Archbishop Robert Runcie of Canterbury (left) and the Primus of Scotland, Bishop Alastair Haggart, look on. (CREDIT: DPS Photo)

81140/5 At the Service of Evensong that closed the meeting of Anglican primates in Washington Cathedral, His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, was one of the lectors. Before the service, Prince Charles exchanged greetings with Vice President and Mrs. George Bush, seated to his left. (CREDIT: CAROL DEARNALEY)

# # # # #

DP, DX



